Course Description

This course focuses on emerging issues in the field of Chinese politics, and (mostly) younger authors who have published books and articles since 2010. It leans towards state-society relations and local politics rather than high politics or the central state. Topics covered include: control and accountability, signaling and information, online expression, censorship and self-censorship, living with repression, protest and protest control, rights and rules consciousness, people’s congresses and representation, big data, and policy implementation and experimentation.

Books

1) Diana Fu, Mobilizing without the Masses: Control and Contention in China (Cambridge, 2017) (paperback)
2) Rongbin Han, Contesting Cyberspace in China: Online Expression and Authoritarian Resilience (Columbia, 2018) (paperback)
4) Kevin O’Brien and Lianjiang Li, Rightful Resistance in Rural China (Cambridge, 2006) (paperback)

Course Requirements

4 seminar papers (40% of course grade) -- Due on Tuesday evening (5 pm) of the four weeks for which a student is responsible. (Copies should be sent to the e-mail addresses of all students and, of course, to the instructor). Each paper (approx. 3-4 double-spaced pages) should critically engage the readings assigned for that week. Students may focus on gaps or conflicts in one (or more) readings and may bring in relevant material from other courses. The purpose of these papers is to stimulate class discussion. Papers should not be a summary but rather an effort to highlight an important point, a methodological issue, an area of disagreement, and/or an assumption that underlies or permeates the reading(s). Efforts should be made to explore ways in which the readings relate to each other and how they help us improve our understanding of politics and China. During class, each author should be ready to explain (and expand upon) the points raised. Hint: When preparing your papers, pretend you are an overburdened student racing to figure out "why this reading is so important" the night before your qualifying exams. You might also consider how the readings speak to other areas of political science (or other regions of the world) with which you are familiar.

A 15-20 page research paper (40% of course grade) or a final exam (2 out of 3 essay questions, appx. 4000 words total)
Class participation (20% of course grade) -- All students will be expected to participate in class discussions and to come to class prepared to consider the seminar papers for that week.

Please keep a copy of your essays until the instructor has returned them. Also, to sidestep easily avoidable problems related to computer failures, keep a copy of your essays on a flash drive or safely in the cloud.

Week 1 **Introduction**


Week 2 **Control and Accountability**

Daniel Mattingly, *The Art of Political Control in China*


Student Discussants:
1) 2) 3)

Week 3 **Signaling and Information**


Haifeng Huang, “Propaganda as Signaling,” *Comparative Politics* 47:4 (July 2015): 419-437


Student Discussants:
1) 2) 3)
Week 4 Online Expression

Rongbin Han, Contesting Cyberspace in China: Online Expression and Authoritarian Resilience


Student Discussants:  
1)  
2)  
3)  

Week 5 Censorship

Margaret Roberts, Censored: Distraction and Diversion Inside China’s Great Firewall

Student Discussants:  
1)  
2)  
3)  

Week 6 Self-Censorship and Living with Repression

Self-Censorship:


Dimitar D Gueorguiev, Li Shao, Charles Crabtree, “Blurring the Lines: Rethinking Censorship Under Autocracy” (at ssrn.com)


Living with Repression and Avoiding Conflict:


Week 7 Policy Implementation and Misimplementation

Problematic Implementation:


Ciqi Mei and Margaret M. Pearson, “Killing a Chicken to Scare the Monkeys? Deterrence Failure and Local Defiance in China,” China Journal 72 (July 2014): 75-97

Responding to Non-Compliance:

Denise van der Kamp, “Blunt Force Regulation and Bureaucratic Control: Understanding China’s War on Pollution,” Governance, forthcoming

“Good Enough,” Effective and Enthusiastic Implementation:


Student Discussants:
1) 2) 3)

Week 8 Policy Experimentation: Successes, Partial Successes and Failures


Wen-Hsuan Tsai and Nicola Dean, “Experimentation under Hierarchy in Local Conditions: Cases of Political Reform in Guangdong and Sichuan, China,” China Quarterly 218 (June 2014): 339–358


The Xi Era:


Student Discussants:
1) 2) 3)

Week 9 People’s Congresses: Representation?


Private Benefits:


Student Discussants:
1) 2) 3)

Week 10 Rights Consciousness vs. Rules Consciousness and Legal Consciousness


Lianjiang Li, “Rights Consciousness and Rules Consciousness in Contemporary China,” China Journal 64 (July 2010): 47-68


Legal Consciousness:


Student Discussants: 1) 2) 3)

Week 11 Rightful Resistance (and Our Critics)

Kevin J. O’Brien and Lianjiang Li, Rightful Resistance in Rural China


Student Discussants: 1) 2) 3)

Week 12 Rethinking What’s Collective About Collective Action

Diana Fu, Mobilizing Without the Masses: Control and Contention in China

Student Discussants: 1) 2) 3)

Week 13 Policing Protest and Crime

Repression, Hard and Soft:


Everyday Policing:

Suzanne Scoggins, “Rethinking Authoritarian Resilience and the Coercive Apparatus,” *Comparative Politics*, forthcoming

Student Discussants:
1) 2) 3)

Week 14 **New Methods: Big Data and Protest Event Analysis**

Yao Li and Manfred Elfstrom, “Does Greater Coercive Capacity Increase Overt Repression? Evidence from China”


Chih-Jou Jay Chen and Yongshun Cai, “Upward Targeting and Social Protests in China”


All in the *Journal of Contemporary China*, forthcoming

**Monday May 10, 9am;** By e-mail to kobrien@berkeley.edu – Final Paper or Take-home Exam Due